

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for transmitting voice messages from a caller over a network, said system comprising:

a first access device coupled to a network and to a first communication medium, said first access device comprising:

a voice encoding device configured to receive a first voice signal from a first voice device and generate a digital message file; and

a transmission device configured to transmit said digital message file through said network;

wherein said transmission device transmits said digital message file through said network after said voice encoding device generates said digital message file.

2. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 wherein said network comprises a public packet-switched network such as is the Internet.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) A method for transmitting voice messages over a network, said method comprising:

receiving a voice signal by a first access device;

encoding said voice signal into a digital message file by said first access device;  
and

after said step of encoding, transmitting said digital message file over a network.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of:

transmitting a voice signal from a first voice device at a caller location in a first service area through a first communication medium to said access device;

wherein said first voice device is a telephone and said first communication medium comprises a circuit-switched network such as the switched is—a telephone network (PSTN) line.

6 – 30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 wherein said first voice device is a telephone and said first communication medium comprises a circuit-switched network such as the switched is—a telephone network (PSTN) line.

32. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 further comprising:

a second access device coupled to said network and to a second communication medium, said second access device comprising:

a receiving device configured to receive said digital message file from said network; and

a voice decoding device configured to decode said digital message file and generate a second voice signal for a second voice device coupled to said second communication medium

wherein said voice decoding device generates said second voice signal after said receiving device receives said digital message file.

33. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 32 wherein said second access device further comprises a first storage device capable of storing said digital message file.

34. (Currently Amended) A system for receiving voice messages from a network, said system comprising:

a first access device coupled to a network and to a first communication medium, said first access device comprising:

a receiving device configured to receive a digital message file from said network; and

a voice decoding device configured to decode said digital message file and generate a first voice signal for a first voice device coupled to said first communication medium,

wherein said voice decoding device generates said first voice signal after said receiving device receives said digital message file.

35. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 34 wherein said network comprises a public packet-switched network such as is the Internet.

36. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 34 wherein said first voice device is a telephone and said first communication medium comprises a circuit-switched network such as the switched ~~is a~~ telephone network (PSTN) line.

37. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 34 further comprising:

a second access device coupled to said network and to a second communication medium, said second access device comprising:

a voice encoding device configured to receive a second voice signal from a second voice device and generate said digital message file; and

a transmission device configured to transmit said digital message file through said network;

wherein said transmission device transmits said digital message file through said network after said voice encoding device generates said digital message file.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 wherein said network comprises a public packet-switched network such as is the Internet.

39. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 further comprising:

receiving said digital message file from said network by a second access device;  
and

after said step of receiving, decoding said digital message file for a second voice device coupled to a second communication medium.

40. (Currently Amended) A method of receiving voice messages from a network, said method comprising:

receiving a digital message file from said network by a first access device; and

after said step of receiving, decoding said digital message file to generate a first voice signal for a first voice device coupled to a first communication medium.

41. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 40 wherein said network comprises a public packet-switched network such as ~~is~~ the Internet.

42. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 40 wherein said first voice device is a telephone and said first communication medium comprises a circuit-switched network such as the switched ~~is a~~ telephone network (PSTN) line.

43. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 40 further comprising:

receiving a voice signal by a second access device;

encoding said voice signal into said digital message file by said second access device; and

after said step of encoding, transmitting said digital message file over said network to said first access device.

44. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 wherein said first access device further comprises a first storage device capable of storing said digital message file.

45. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 32 wherein said second voice device is a telephone and said second communication medium comprises a circuit-switched network such as the switched ~~is a~~ telephone network (PSTN) line.

46. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 33 wherein said first access device further comprises a second storage device capable of storing said digital message file.

47. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 34 wherein said first access device further comprises a first storage device capable of storing said digital message file.

48. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of storing said digital message file on a first storage device in said first access device.

49. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of storing said digital message file on a first storage device in said second access device.

50. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 39 wherein said second voice device is a telephone and said second communication medium comprises a circuit-switched network such as the switched ~~is a~~ telephone network (PSTN) line.

51. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 49, further comprising the step of storing said digital message file on a second storage device in said first access device.

52. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 40, further comprising the step of storing said digital message file on a first storage device in said first access device.